


First
Annual
Stephan G.
Stephansson
Poetry
Competition



Anthology 1986

Alberta
CULTURE



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The First Annual Stephan G. Stephansson Poetry Competition

During the 1985/86 school year, Alberta Culture, Historic Sites Service sponsored the First Annual Stephan G. Stephansson Poetry Competition for school age children in the Red Deer region. The objectives of this competition are to create an awareness of Stephan G. Stephansson, Canada's "Poet of the Rocky Mountains" and his poetry, and to provide an opportunity for students to express themselves in verse.

Poems were judged by an independent panel of judges and one winner and two honourable mentions were chosen in each of the grade categories 3 - 12. Prizes were awarded at the Fourth Annual Tombola Festival on July 13th, at Stephansson House.

This anthology contains the ten first prize and twenty honourable mention poems as selected by our judges. We hope you will enjoy reading them.

Spring has Sprung

Spring, Spring, Spring has sprung,
The flowers are in bloom.
The trees are sprouting little buds,
To bloom the month of June.
Spring, Spring, Spring has sprung,
The brook is blue and clear,
The grass puts on his crisp green coat,
So glad that Spring is here!
Spring, Spring, Spring has sprung,
The raindrops gently fall,
The sun peeks out behind the clouds,
The rainbow pleases all.

*Chris Bolan
First Prize
Grade Three*

Red Deer, Mountainview School

Rainbows

Rainbows are high
In the sky.
Red, blue and green.
They are the most beautiful thing
that I have ever seen.

I love the rainbow
It's so bright
The colours are
The prettiest sight.

*Jennifer Foy
Honourable Mention
Grade Three
Sylvan Lake, C.P. Blakely School*

Valentine

I have a horse,
She's faster than thunder
When she comes to a bridge,
She never goes under.

She isn't really
So very old.
She has a beautiful
Mane of gold.

She has a mane
That's different too.
Her name also means:
"I love you".

That beautiful
Palimino's mine.
And her name
Is Valentine.

*Talena Hilman
Honourable Mention
Grade Three
Sylvan Lake, C.P. Blakely School*

The Prowler

The prowler hunts for its prey each night,
Slithering through the dewy alleys
Shyly doing everything right.
Roaring into creepy valleys
Warning its prey that it's drawing near,
Yelling out "I'm here, I'm here!"
Beware, for I can see you clear!"
Rolling, twisting, tossing, hissing!
Then, suddenly, it feels tired,
Dies down, starts to fade.
So, soon, it's just a breeze,
Gives us just one more sneeze.
Then it lies down to get ready
For tomorrow he must prowl again.

*Stacy Nelson
First Prize
Grade Four
Rocky Mountain House, Lochearn School*

A Walk Through the Forest

Walking through the forest,
Oh, what a beautiful sight.
The sky is clear, and I love to hear,
The birds sing loud and bright.

What beautiful flowers I see,
It's almost like a dream.
They smile with glee and wave to me,
As I walk past a stream.

My dog wags his tail
And barks as I pull back the leash.
I start to run, it is so much fun,
As the wind blows on my face.

The last tree has past
And now we're on our way home.
The forest was fun but the day is done,
And off to my bed will I roam.

*Jason Huss
Honourable Mention
Grade Four
Lacombe, James S. McCormick School*

People

Dad are you the star I saw tonight?
flashing in the sky so bright.
Maybe it's just a meaningful sight
that I should see you every night.
I remember the kite you made me last
That could fly very fast.
You taught me how to fish and cast
and that was the very last
Time.
And that's how I remember you Dad.

*Sadie Shippelt
Honourable Mention
Grade Four
Caroline, Caroline School*

A Woodland Spring

The spring is bubbling in the wood,
I love its music sweet
I listen to its gurgling mirth,
Its music has sweet peace.

The rippling spring sings merrily,
It dances in delight
The spring does sing so happily,
It sings both day and night.

The spring goes bubbling endlessly,
It sings the year around
It slowly wears the earth away,
A stream goes through the ground!

The spring will run for years to come,
To dance through years ahead
The years that swiftly come and go,
I listen to their tread.

The spring is such a quiet spot,
I'll love it till I die,
It's always cool and never hot,
I'll love the spot for aye.

*Gloria Lois Klassen
First Prize
Grade Five
Stettler, Lakeview Christian School*

The Song of Spring

Down in the meadow
The robin sings clear,
The squirrels frisk about
With the antelope and deer.

The river runs wild
Over pebbles and stones,
The lark sings sweetly
In different tones.

Through the air
These voices ring,
This is the pleasant
Song of spring.

*Lisa Nilsson
Honourable Mention
Grade Five
Stettler, Stettler Elementary School*

A Dream to Fly

When the Wright brothers invented the plane
Everyone thought they were insane
They'll never get it into the sky
But the brothers knew that it would fly
Then the day came that would bring them fame
And applause from far and wide
Who would take the first ride they must now decide
So they flipped a coin and Wilbur would join
The graceful birds in flight
But something wasn't right
Give up? No way! We're going to win
So Orville was the next one in

Now when we board the plane let's remember why
Because of two brave brothers who
Once had a dream to fly.

*Darin Law
Honourable Mention
Grade Five
Red Deer, G.H. Dawe School*

War

You have to say a painful good-bye,
You pray to God he doesn't die.
While leaning back in your chair
You think, he's really out there!
For years tanks, bombs and guns blast,
And in time the war is over at last
But when he doesn't come home to me
The hurt and sorrow in our family
But he fought for his country and we are proud
Now he's in heaven on that special cloud
We will remember him always and others too
I hope you will remember all of those people
who died for you.

*Tara Warren
First Prize
Grade Six
Red Deer, Annie L. Gaetz School*

Storm

The wind whipping the Canadian flag,
The wind giving the leaves a thrust,
The wind screaming its cruel call,
Mother Nature is at work.

The leaves flying every where,
The blackened sky,
The clouds blackish gray and filled with gloom,
And lightening bolts,
Leaving charred limbs on a tree,
Mother Nature is at work.

The rain pelting down on roof tops like bullets,
Thunder noisily banging,
White caps on a lake,
Mother Nature controls the environment,
Mother Nature is at work!

*Lana Zerebeski
Honourable Mention
Grade Six
Red Deer, Annie L. Gaetz School*

Lightning

I terrorize the round, rough earth
Flashing and dancing in the solitary sky
Tossing and shaking the earth with a loud detonation
In the glooming and unspeaking twilight
I strip the earth with my streaking bolts
Beaming with a silver touch
I dart through the sky as if to say,
Be wary of chance, I may shoot your way
I'm the talk of the heavens!

*John Bottomley
Honourable Mention
Grade Six
Red Deer, Annie L. Gaetz School*

Wind Spun

The dark crumpled leaves remind me of butterflies,
Now as they blow in the icy spring breeze.
They whirl, and they wave on the wings of the wind,
Then they drop to the ground in the shelter of trees.

Spring butterflies dance in the warmest of breezes,
They wait for the dawn on the fresh shoots of grass.
Lifted by rays of the warm rising sun
They float low in the air until daylight has passed.

Butterflies' wings are all splashed with bright colours,
And leaves are so dark with deep black and brown.
When caught by the wind, they are one with each other.
The light of the rainbow and dark of the ground.

*Cheryl Dobinson
First Prize
Grade Seven
Clive, Satinwood School*

Grandma

It's never been easy,
It's been a rocky road,
You were always there for me when I had a heavy load.
Then you left without a trace,
You left me sad without an even pace,
You were special to me ... I could tell you everything.
I could turn to you in time of need,
You were my Grandmother and a terrific friend,
Then came Christmas Eve when reality hit me
and it all came to an end.
There you lay in a wooden box,
The Minister over you,
What a terrible way to see you go,
You looked so shut in, so lifeless,
I kissed you lovingly on the cheek,
Your skin was bitter and so was I,
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DIE?
And now that the years have gone by,
I still think of you and cry,
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DIE?

*Deanna Dunphy
Honourable Mention
Grade Seven
Lacombe, Lacombe Junior High School*

Jennifer

She sees the world go round and round,
All the stares,
And the frowns,

Oh how her world ached today,
All alone,
And afraid.

She mopes and cries,
For she knows that it is rough,
And in disguise,
She pretends that she is tough.

She tries to ignore,
Smart remarks,
But everytime they put her down,
She holds her head up like a crown.

*Julie McLean
Honourable Mention
Grade Seven
Caroline, Caroline School*

Storms

As I hear, from under my bed,
The lightning and thunder I dread,
I am frightened can't you see,
So won't anyone come help me?
I hear the rain hitting the window pane.
Sounds like someone's tapping it with a cane.
I hear some kind of scary sound,
Oh, it's Dad I've been found.
He asks me if I'm alright.
I say yes it's the noise in the night.
Then he bent down and gave me a hug
Next he tucked me in all nice and snug
When he left he shut out the light
And said goodnight.
Now the noises don't seem so scary in the night.

*Cheryl Froman
First Prize
Grade Eight
Lacombe, Lacombe Junior High School*

Friends

Friends give you hope when all hope is gone,
the light at the beginning of every new dawn.
Someone to laugh with, to joke, and to ruse;
a shoulder to cry on when you find that you lose.
Someone to talk to when your problems mount;
to help you sort out which things don't count.

Friends relight your lamp when your flame has gone out,
try to reassure you when you are in doubt.
Someone to share with, a hand to hold,
a glimmer of warmth when all hearts are cold.
Someone to listen to, help if you can,
someone you stayed with when everyone ran.

Friends dive in to save you, no matter how deep;
they help you over mountains, no matter how steep.
Someone to trust to completely confide in;
they don't really care who or what you've been.
Someone who cares only what you are and what you'll be;
the good things in you are what they see.

But having a friend is a two way street --
you have thoughts to live up to; expectations to meet.
It takes a little work and a lot of care,
or one day you'll look and they won't be there.
But a friendship, if broken, you should try to mend,
because the best thing to have in this world is a friend ...

*Kandy Cameron
Honourable Mention
Grade Eight
Ponoka, St. Augustine's School*

Youth

You tell us to grow up
To act like the adults.
But why? When all an adult's life is
fighting and pretending?
When you cannot have fun
to run in the sand lay in the sun?

You tell us to grow up
To not fight with our brothers.
But it is not the young who kill.
Not the young who cheat and lie.
We are not the ones who rarely say the truth.

You tell us to grow up
To be seen and not heard.
But what is life without the laughing?
And all that you look forward to is being
old, sitting on a bench.
The memories of yesterdays the
Only things to keep them living.

You tell us to grow up
To learn to live with the rules.
But if we never change,
We will never get ahead,
And in our minds we
Know we would be better off dead.

You tell us to grow up
To act more mature
But don't you think life already goes too fast?
Don't you think we should hold on to the youth and
dreams to the very last?

*Kathy Williams
Honourable Mention
Grade Eight
Eckville, Eckville Junior High School*

As We Talk

As we talk in the halls
I can think of nothing to say,
But I just keep on staring at you.
I want to say something
But nothing will come.
And then,
You try to say something
But nothing will come either
So, we just stare at each other in
That great old hallway.
And there we stand...
All alone.

*Lee Ann Turner
First Prize
Grade Nine*

Rocky Mountain House, Will Sinclair High School

(Untitled)

The stiff, grey-haired figure
Shuffles along with
Slow, pained movements.
Her wrinkled hands grasp
The worn scrapbook
Filled with memories
of younger days.
With her sad eyes
She glances at the photos
And is brought back in time
To laughter, love and friends.
Chimes of the clock bring
her back to the pain filled reality
that she now lives in ...
Slowly closing the book
She looks around her lonely apartment.
Through slow tears
She watches
the fading sunset.

*Michelle Elmhirst
Honourable Mention
Grade Nine
Lacombe, Lacombe Junior High School*

Suspended

Her life is that of a girl
- no, a woman ...
a teenager
suspended between the two.

No longer a child
but not yet an adult
distinction is difficult
- as everything seems to be right now.

Even the smallest decision
requires endless consideration
- the comfort of Levis and sneakers
or the beauty of skirts and slippers?
everything has earthmoving effects
on her eggshell existence.

To spend the noon-hour
shooting hoop with the guys
or sitting on the sidelines ...
admiring them?
To be or not to be ...
A lady?

A paradox in herself
Marilyn Monroe beauty mark in a
Shirley Temple face
full lips and wide, innocent eyes
womanly curves and athlete's legs
the voice of a vixen and the laugh of a child
— whatever happened to all or nothing?

The bounce in her step deceives her attempts
at poise and sophistication
The bruise on her knee betrays her
As she feigns the loyal spectator
The darling dimple in her cheek foils
her glossy smile and batted lashes.

To "The Guys" she is a mystery
(not mysterious, just a mystery!)
is she -
their friend
or one of THEM —
the "Feared Women"
each a pillar of untouchable beauty
to the intimidated male masses
admired
... but accepted?

Deep in a drawer
- lies a pair of faded Levis
In the back of a closet
- a couple of tattered sneakers
Far beneath a bed
- a worn basketball
High on a shelf
- a skirt of the finest silk
Buried in a mound of tissue
- a set of lacy stockings
Hidden in a slim box
- a chain of slightly tarnished silver
missing a link or two
a heart shaped locket - engraving hardly legible.

Momentos of her life as a girl
no, a woman ...
a teenager
suspended between the two.

*Alice Swabey
Honourable Mention
Grade Nine
Sylvan Lake, H.J. Cody School*

What It Is

What it is to stand
And watch the very thing one loves destroyed
To feel the autumn wind
Its chilly fingers wrapping 'round my heart
What it is to stand
Crumbling pieces of my life surround me
To taste the acrid bile
While fragments of myself are left apart
What it is to stand
And don the sharp bitterness of loathing
To weep a sea of tears
And feel the sorrow of a loss so great
What it is to stand
Bearing a burden no mere mortal can
To hear the victim's cries
And face the paradox of grief and hate
What it is to stand
And be the taker of a million lives
The future in your hand

*Jennie Munroe
First Prize
Grade Ten*

Red Deer, Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School

First to Share my Feelings

When I first saw you, you were smiling
Laughing and being with your friends
It was when you first saw me also,
And you smiled, I smiled then.

At first I just thought I was dreaming
But in a while I found it was true,
Now I am spending my life,
Waiting and thinking of you.

It seems that I can't live without you,
I see you everyday in my mind
In my dreams we are always together,
But in life, that is not what we find.

I'm on the outside of your world,
Looking in and dreaming my life through,
I really feel so helpless,
Only I don't know what to do.

I want to talk, and be with you forever,
But you don't even know who I am
I want just one night together,
One night that would never end.

I think of you but I don't know you
You're a book without pages
No story that's young and new
Just an unopening cover that never ages.

Yes, you know my face
But I don't know how you feel
I'm scared you'll laugh and turn away,
I'm scared you won't think it's real.

I don't know how to approach you
Maybe I should just forget these tears,
Not knowing how you feel about me
Just strengthens all my fears.

I think you and I belong together,
You think "No it just can't be!"
But I can't change your mind
Until you will listen to me.

Your feelings are important
Your hopes and dreams are too,
Share all those with me,
And I'll share my love with you.

*Patti Skocdopole
Honourable Mention
Grade Ten
Condor, David Thompson High School*

The Deadly Creator

Brightest light of Mother Nature shines brilliantly
Far above, atop the mountain peak,
Silently, as the day before,
The living Earth slowly comes
Before the dazzling sun in the morn;
Even the slightest movement
Is caught by the all-seeing eye.
Another day of the burning heat
Causes the death of remaining souls;
All goodness of the creating sun
Is overshadowed by its destruction of its own;
The unbearable heat rises onward
As does the flaming sun upward.
Almost too late,
The brave clouds make their way west
Deceiving the deadly sun;
The blanket of a new life is spread.
The forgiven land once again survives
As its mother lays it to rest;
With the saving downpour,
The land is renewed.
The cloudy sheet is replaced by the darkest blanket;
With the night, the land's dim hopes are revived
And it will live quietly until the next dawn.

*Tom Noble
Honourable Mention
Grade Ten
Rimbey, Rimbey High School*

Grandmother

I like to think that, at twelve,
She ran barefoot through the July clover,
In her white, cotton dress,
Wore her hair in braids,
And smelled like the early morning
After a thundershower,
And the wild roses that grow beyond
The split-rail fence of adulthood...

Then she got old-
She used to hold me tight
With arms that were strong from work,
And kiss me gently on the cheek.
And sometimes when I close my eyes,
I can smell her house,
The clean sheets, and the flowers
She used to pick.

Her eyes smiled at me
Like fireflies dancing in the dark,
Always with a hint of young mischief.
Though her deep wrinkles hid a face
That was once beautiful; in my eyes,
She was always beautiful-
Beautiful in the heart.

She's gone now
I have a picture of her
From one of her photo albums;
She's young, and she sits serene,
Smiling at me, and the years evaporate
Like morning dreams and old perfume.

*Darla Pregoda
First Prize
Grade Eleven
Rimbey, Rimbey High School*

Whispers of the Wind

The wind whispers a sweet lullaby
As we walk hand in hand;
The silence around sets a romantic feeling
And we can move like one.
It is after the rain.
And the sweet smell seems peaceful
As the raindrops glisten
In the light of the moon.
We know nothing in the world can be
As wonderful as that of being with each other
And loving one another,
To feel the presence of the other,
To cry with each other at mourning
And laugh at times of joy.
Just to be there with you would mean the world
To me - a world of perfection!

*Cindy Burke
Honourable Mention
Grade Eleven
Rimbey, Rimbey High School*

Freedom

A silent call
through the endless night
to the depths of space
for freedom I fight.

Locked in a tower
of cold gray stone,
wishing on the star
I call my own.

Pent emotions
on the edge of release,
threatening to break
through the walls I keep.

White masks in the darkness
down the road
dancing in silence,
calling me home.

The carefully kept disguises
to cover the pain
from all the countless
without spoken names.

*Marilyn Rude
Honourable Mention
Grade Eleven
Rimbey, Rimbey High School*

Stained Glass

We stroll through the temple of ourselves
Looking for the colors that will decorate our lives,
Searching the darkness in the corners of the mind,
When we need only look towards the
Stained glass window
That we have made; the mosaic of ourselves.
There shines the red of our challenges,
The indigo of our fears and heartaches,
And the gold of our laughter.
Blue comfort and green hopes of growth
Sparkle from the window,
Complementing the white light of our childhood
Dreams and fantasies.
Only the black and grey memories
Of harder times are not in the pattern;
We've learned to stow them away in the attic,
For the colors that we've
Arranged in the glass
Are the colors that decorated our lives and
Create a mosaic
That glows with the mysterious color of our futures;
The color of the sun.

*Simone Lehmann
First Prize
Grade Twelve*

Stettler, William E. Hay Composite High School

The Balloon

I started out empty, not really having any direction at all,
I was small and helpless
as I watched the world carry on before me

Suddenly, you came along and picked me up
You filled me in a sense that I had never really
known. I began to grow and you held me so that everyone
could see me

I was at my fullest, and you were there to hold me
There I was, wanting to offer you so much in return,
and not being capable. The momentum had left,
and yet the pressure remained, for you had not left
me any room to expand, suffocating within myself.

Not having any direction to take,
I burst,
Leaving pieces for others to step on;
and you,
You walked away
and it was as if nothing
had ever happened.

*Venesa Rompain
Honourable Mention
Grade Twelve
Rimbey, Rimbey High School*

Dachau

Row upon row they stood,
Two ways to go,
Left or right,
Life or death.

Each hollow face set in one stone expression,
No way out now.

The black iron door opens only one way,
In yet not out,
When shut, the clank echos in the minds of
millions,
The sound of no return.

Ovens belched smoke over the compound,
The sweet aroma of a million souls,
Always stoked with the living logs of
Men,
Women,
And children.

And those who played God,
Followed insane orders,
and treated them like cattle for slaughter.

Fooled by the shower head,
No water flowed for them,
Only the sound of hissing gas,
A few more martyrs fall.

Quiet as it is today, with the blue sky over me,
My shoes walk on the tiny pebbles of Dachau,
Stretching over the vast courtyard.

In this blue sky,
My mind's ears hear the bloody cries,
Of hollow faces and lost hopes,
Silently screaming from another time,
Their pleas for mercy scoffed and laughed at,
By the men under one dark symbol.

As I leave, I hear a noise,
A clank,
Maybe the wind,
Maybe the winds of time...

*(Written after taking a walk through a former concentration camp, Dachau.
The first camp set up by Hitler in Germany
in 1933. It was liberated by the Allies in 1945.)*

*Matthew Myles
Honourable Mention
Grade Twelve
Ponoka, Ponoka Senior High School*

Acknowledgements

POETRY COMPETITION JUDGES

Grade 3 - 6

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Grades 10 - 12

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